

25 APRIL

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Publication No. 157140

ISSN 0012-2874

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

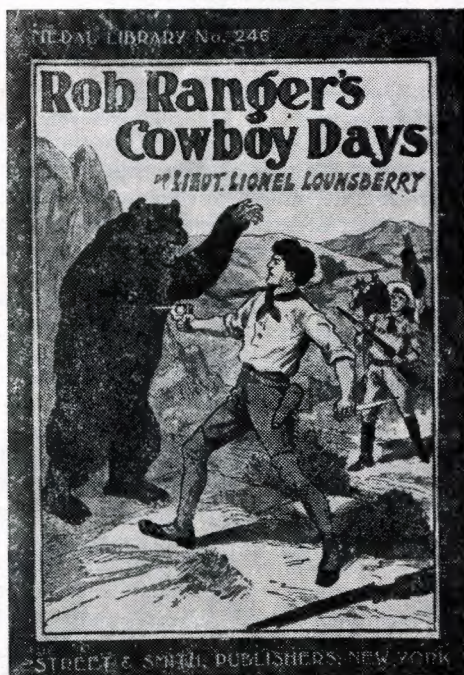
Vol. 52 No. 2

April 1983

Whole No. 560

CHILD LABOR IN THE STRATEMEYER SYNDICATE SERIES BOOKS

By Deidre Johnson



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #231 MEDAL/NEW MEDAL LIBRARY

Publisher: Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York, N. Y. Issues: 858. Dates: Jan. 28, 1899 to Dec. 7, 1915. Schedule of Issue: 1 thru 8, bi-weekly; 9 thru 858, weekly. Size: 7½x5". Pages: 200 to 300. Price 10c thru 378. 15c Nos. 379 thru 858. Illustrations: Pictorial colored cover. Contents: Boys books, most of the Alger and Optic stories found their way into the series. Street & Smith also used the series to reprint its weeklies such as Tip Top Weekly, All Sports Library, Rough Rider Weekly, Do and Dare, Comrades and many others. With No. 379 the name was changed by adding the word "New." All that was new was the price which was raised to 15c. The Merriwell stories were reissued as New Medal Libraries so that there will be two Merriwell publications of the Medal Library thru No. 378.

CHILD LABOR IN THE STRATEMEYER SYNDICATE SERIES BOOKS A Preliminary Study

By Deidre Johnson

"Best boy (worker) barring none, I ever had . . ." (the grocer) declared. "Never late in the morning, neat in his work, obliging in his manners to my customers, and willing to stay after hours if there is a rush. In fact, I'm so well satisfied with Toby that I expect to add a couple of dollars to his wages this very next Saturday. I'm told he's the idol of his mother's eye. She's a widow, you know, with three small children, Toby being the eldest. He shows signs of being like his father; and Matthew Farrell was one of our leading citizens up to the time of his death. . . . Toby's all right . . . and he's promised to stick right here. Some day he might be a partner in this business, who knows?" — Fred Fenton on the Crew (1913)

I. Introduction

In 1900, 1,750,178 children between the ages of ten and fifteen worked more than twenty hours per week.(1) In 1920, sixteen years after the inception of the National Child Labor Committee, 1,060,858 youths still constituted part of the labor force.(2) While crusaders urged legislation prohibiting the employment of children and attempted to educate the public on the importance of labor reforms, one type of literature—written for and about children—often served to perpetuate myths about child labor and to uphold the status quo: the series book.

The series books, descendants of the dime novels and of Horatio Alger's "rags-to-riches" tales,(3) developed in the late nineteenth century and flourished through the first four decades of the twentieth century.(4) For much of the latter period, one man, Edward Stratemeyer, and his writing organization, the Stratemeyer Syndicate, dominated the field, producing many of the best-selling series under a variety of pseudonyms.(5) While a number of the earlier Syndicate series, such as the Boys of Business, Ralph (of the Railroad), the Moving Picture Chums, and the Moving Picture Girls, echoed the work-oriented Alger novels of the preceding century by focusing on the career adventures and successes of children and adolescents, as the century progressed, so did the series books' emphasis on the school and leisure time activities of non-employed upper-middle class protagonists. The number of books featuring child workers gradually declined, and series such as the Bobbsey Twins, the Outdoor Girls, the Motor Boys, and the Motor Girls, chronicling the escapades—in school and on vacation—of children and adolescents who had never been part of the work force, gained in popularity.

It is these series, some of which remained popular for decades, with which

DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP — Vol. 52, No. 2, Whole No. 560 — April 1983
Publications No. 157140 ISSN 0012-2874

Published six times per year at 821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Edward T. LeBlanc, editor, 87 School Street, Fall River, Mass. 02720. Second class postage paid at Lawrence, Kansas. 66044. Assistant Editor, Ralph F. Cummings, 161 Pleasant St., South Grafton, Mass. 01560. Subscription: \$10 per year. Ad rates—15c per word, \$3.00 per column inch; \$6.00 per quarter page; \$8.00 per half page and \$15.00 per full page.

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to 821 Vermont St., Lawrence, Kans. 66044

this study is concerned, for even though these books abandoned the ideal of the working class hero and his fortunes, they did not completely abandon the child laborer. Instead, many books cast the child either as part of the background of a scene, performing menial services for the upper class characters, or as part of the framework of the plot, in a situation requiring the main character's help. In neither case was the portrayal of the child worker designed to make the National Child Labor Committee's job any easier, for the series books, while concentrating on the lives of upper-middle class characters, still communicated several ideas about young workers to the children who read them. Their descriptions and treatment of juvenile workers not only presented an inaccurate view of working children and reinforced the image of child laborers as youths working diligently to support themselves or their widowed mothers, but sometimes also conveyed a more subtle message: poor children were supposed to work—there was no alternative; wealthier children were not.

II. Child laborers in the series books

To be fair, it must be said that not all of the Stratemeyer Syndicate series books contain examples of child labor. Only thirteen of the twenty-eight series books surveyed include at least one reference to working children,(6) although a fourteenth, "Dorothy Dale's School Rivals," discusses the possibility that Dorothy, age sixteen (approximately), might have to leave boarding school and find a job,(7) while a fifteenth, "The Rover Boys on Land and Sea," has the three Rover boys, ages sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen (approximately), forced to work—for several hours—to pay for their passage aboard ship. (They had been shipwrecked.)(8) Two of the remaining titles describe girls working behind restaurant counters, both in businesses owned by their fathers, but comments in the texts suggest that the girls could be sixteen to nineteen years old.(9)

The books that do mention child labor present a distorted view of the types of jobs at which children are employed, emphasizing service tasks and agriculture and virtually ignoring mining and manufacturing. Twenty-nine child workers appear in the books, working at nineteen different jobs. Four of these children change employment or refer to a second job: one boy leaves farm work to become an office boy;(10) a berry picker states he's also been a caddy and accepts work as such;(11) two girls hold, in rapid succession, jobs as berry pickers and domestic helpers (concurrently), then waitresses, theater entertainers, and candy makers in a seaside candy kitchen, before being offered jobs as maids.(12) The remaining twenty-five children are employed as berry pickers (11 children), newsboys (2), delivery boys (1 butcher, 1 grocer), laundry truck drivers (1), stableboys (1), peddlers (1), hotel messenger boys (1), apartment doorboys/elevator boys (1), soda jerks (1), cash girls—city department store (1), factory workers—box factory (1), boat crew—fisherman/sailor (1), and theater entertainers—singer (1).(13)

While agriculture and animal husbandry account for 41% of the children working in the series books, the number of berry pickers—and thus the number of laborers in agriculture—is swelled by a passing reference to "a dozen or more lads"; only five workers are actually named.(14) Even so, the figure is well below the 1910 and 1920 census figures for child labor in agriculture—72% and 61%, respectively—and, conversely, well above the 1920 figures for children employed in agriculture in New York and New Jersey (4.8% and 3.8%),(15) the approximate location of the books. The proportion of children involved in jobs other than in agriculture, animal husbandry, mining, and mechanical industries is high (56.4%) in relation to national figures, but

reasonable in light of New Jersey and New York statistics for 1920 (36.1% and 59.4%).(16) It is in manufacturing that the figure (2.6%) is drastically out of proportion. Although 60.1% of the children employed in New Jersey and 35.8% of the young workers in New York were involved in manufacturing in 1920,(17) only one factory worker, an older girl who has been employed in a box factory in her home town since she was fourteen or fifteen, appears in the series books.(18) No mention is made of the textile mills, clothing factories, or glass industry, all prime targets of the National Child Labor Committee; indeed, few of the jobs (except agriculture) involve restricted movement, constant repetition of one chore, or confinement indoors.

The conditions under which the children work are rarely elaborated, nor are hours mentioned. There are no scenes such as those described in government reports on child labor:

(S)hrimp, mixed with small pieces of ice, are spread on wire mesh trays—sometimes on tables with mesh tops, often on trays placed on top of empty oyster cans. Women and children pick up the shrimp, break off the head with one hand, and squeeze the flesh from the shell with the other. . . . when the shrimp cup is full, the worker takes it to be weighed. . . . The most common injuries were . . . sore hands from the shrimp acid, and sores resulting from running shrimp thorns into the hands. . . . Many workers said that peeling shrimp made their hands so sore that they could not possibly work at it more than two or three days in succession.(19)

Little Jack, aged 12, up from 3 A.M. and sniping (beans) from 4:30 A.M. to 10 P.M. (who) said: "My fingers is broke." He went to bed last night at 12 and got up at 3. He said he was "awful tired," but his mother made him work. He tried to go home several times. His sister, aged 10, could hardly keep her eyes open and her mother scolded her constantly. . . . (Jack) said work like this was nothing compared to peas when his mother and sister would come home at 1 and 2 A.M. and "They were so sick they fell down and vomited."(20)

Instead, children reading the series books were often presented with cheerful workers in sanitary, interesting jobs.

"Couldn't you all come (back) to-morrow morning and let me take you up on the roof?" he asked them. "The view is really worth while, and I'm up there anyway half the morning looking after my employer's experiments. He is head of a dye house, and is always trying the effect of sunlight on new shades."(21)

They were now in front of the store with the big glass windows. Through this glass could be seen the workers in the exhibition kitchen. There were a few girls in white aprons, and high white caps, doing up pieces of (salt water) "taffy" in papers, and working beside them were two men, also clad in white linen. . . . two girls behind the glass window in the candy kitchen came forward with their trays of freshly-made candy.(22)

Only in agriculture was a clearer, harsher picture painted:

"What an ocean of green!" exclaimed Belle, the aesthetic one, looking over the strawberry patch.

"An ocean of dust, I think," said Bess, as from the afternoon sun and breeze the grind of the picker's feet in the dusty rows between the countless lines of green vines just reached her eyess.

. . . (Two girls) dropped the vines they were overhauling, and stood straight up, with evident stiffness of their young muscles. . . . (then) both again began the task so lately left off, and berry after berry fell into

the little baskets. Rose had almost filled her tray, and Nellie had hers about half full of the quart boxes.

"Rose!" called the woman's shrill voice, from under the blue sunbonnet. "Come up here and count these tally sticks. Some of those kids are snibbing."

With a sigh Rose picked up her tray, and made her way through the narrow paths. . .

(In the sorting shed, Cora asks the woman in charge) "What are those little sticks for?"

"Them's the tally-sticks," answered the woman. "They get one for every quart they pick, and then they cash 'em in. . ."

Four very small boys slouched up the path to the shed. Their crates were full and they seemed almost ready to drop down from exhaustion. One, with fiery red hair, pushed his way ahead of the others and presented his tray to the woman.

He dug his dirty, brown hands down deep in his trouser pockets. Then he brought up three bunches of the tally-sticks.

"Humph! I thought so," said the woman. "Do you mean to tell me a monkey like you can pick ten an hour?"(23)

The miserable working conditions in agriculture, however, are not attributed as much to the job as to the employer. In both books dealing with agricultural workers, the employer is cast as one of the villains of the book and is shown to be deceitful, coarse, and often unnecessarily cruel.

(The berry pickers') grievance against the woman "who ran the patch" seemed to have begun long before her present difficulty with Andy.

"She's as mean as dirt to them girls," said one urchin, "and anybody kin see that them girls is all right."

"They pick (berries) out here from the break of day until the moon is lit," said another, "and after that they has to work in the house. There's a couple of boarders there and the girls keeps the rooms slick."(24)

"Just as I figured," (Mr. Peabody, Bob's employer) said heavily. "Here 'tis noon, and that boy hasn't done a stroke of work since breakfast. Galivanting all over town, I'll be bound. Going to be like his shiftless, worthless father and mother—a charge on the township all his days. You take that pail of whitewash and don't let me see you again till you get the pig house done, you miserable, sneaking poorhouse rat! You'll go without dinner to pay for wasting my time like this! Clear out, now."

"How dare you!" Betty's voice was shaking, but she stood up in the wagon and looked down at Mr. Peabody bravely. "How dare you taunt a boy with what he isn't responsible for? It isn't his fault that he was born in the poorhouse, nor his fault that we're late. . . Oh, how can you be so mean, and close and hateful?"(25)

The books seem to suggest that with a different employer the job might be easier and more pleasant; in both situations, the children working for unsympathetic employers run away and find other jobs, thus solving the problem.

An overwhelming majority of the series books are set in the Middle Atlantic or Northeastern states. Though few of the characters' home towns can be located on maps, according to the texts most are within a day's journey (at 1920 travelling speeds) of New York City. This gives a disproportionate emphasis to child labor in the Northeastern part of the country, since few of the characters in the books stray west of the Mississippi (and those who do fail to mention child laborers as part of the scenery), and none venture along the East Coast farther south than Washington, D. C.

Just as certain locations and types of child labor are glossed over in the series books, so are several reasons for child labor. Difficulties in school, a desire for greater independence or for spending money, or the parents' drive for social advancement or security all contributed to the ranks of child laborers.(26) While John Spargo's study of working children in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts showed 105 out of the 213 youths were employed because of economic necessity,(27) various other investigations indicated that "real economic necessity is responsible for only about a third of the withdrawals from school to do work.(28) Often this was caused by the low wages or unemployment of other family members, not by the loss of a parent. Only 8% of the children in Spargo's study lived in homes without fathers; no children were listed as full orphans.(29) Edward Clopper's survey of Cincinnati newsboys and market children showed that, while 41% of the seventeen market children came from single parent homes (none were full orphans), only 17.6% of the 1752 newsboys questioned had one parent deceased and less than .7% were full orphans.(30) A government investigation of South Carolina textile mills, where employment of children under twelve was permitted in the case of orphans or children of widowed mothers, found only forty-two of the 447 children under twelve were legally employed.(31)

The children reading the series books, however, were presented with none of this information. Reasons for the employment of eight children are included in the texts: four are full orphans; four work because of the death (or, in one case, disappearance) of a parent.

"You see," (Nellie) began, "we had such a nice home and father was always so good. But a man came and asked him to go to sea. The man said they would make lots of money in a short time. This man was a great friend of father and he said he needed someone he could trust on this voyage. First father said no, but when he talked it over with mother, they thought it would be best to go, if they could get so much money in a short time, so he went."

"... When was that?" Mrs. Minturn asked.

"A year ago," Nellie replied, "and he was only to be away six months at the most."

"And that was why you had to leave school, wasn't it?" Mrs. Minturn questioned further.

"Yes, we had not much money saved, and (when father did not return) mother got sick from worrying, so I did not mind going to work. I'm going back to the store again as soon as the doctor says I can," and the little girl showed how anxious she was to help her mother.(32)

Of the four full orphans, one is self-supporting; three are taken in by guardians and work for room and board. (All three are in agriculture and are employed by the "villain employers" previously mentioned.)

"(My mother) died the night I was born," said Bob quietly. "My father was killed in a railroad wreck they figured out. You see my mother was a little out of her head with grief and shock when they found her walking along the road, singing to herself. All she had was the clothes on her back and a little black tin box with her marriage certificate in it and some papers that no one rightly could understand. . . I was brought up in the baby ward and went to school with the others. Many is the boy I've punched for calling me 'Pauper.' And then, when I was ten, Peabody came over and said he wanted a boy to help him on his farm; I could go to school in the winters, and he'd see that I had clothes and everything I needed. I've never been to school a day since, and about all I've needed,

according to him, was lickings."(33)

The self-sufficient child reflects the "little merchant" theme:

"You see, I work through this part of the country. I peddle writing paper, pens, pins, needles and notions," (Jimmie) added, motioning to his pack. . . with a proper regard for his humble calling. . .

. . . 'I peddle around here a lot My father's dead, I haven't got any relatives except a sick aunt that I go to see once in a while, and I'm in business for myself"(34)

Interestingly, although only four of the twenty-nine working children are female (a figure that contrasts sharply with 1900 and 1920 census figures showing 34% and 30% of the child laborers as female),(35) the reasons for all four girls' employment are given (two orphans, two single parent families), suggesting that the authors may have felt some need for explaining the presence of girls in the labor force. The majority of the boys are simply shown working, with no additional comments or background information.

All of this, then, amounted to a series book portrait that pictured child laborers as a strongly male work force in the Northeastern part of the country. Except for agricultural jobs (featuring orphans mistreated by penurious employers), most children's work involved non-hazardous, non-industrial employment, often service-related, that allowed them to earn enough to provide for themselves or their single parent families.

III. Attitudes towards child labor

If the series book portrait seemed to condone child labor by showing children working in clean, healthy jobs and by stressing the necessity for the children's employment, this image was perhaps the necessary backdrop for the series book characters' attitudes towards child laborers. The upper-middle class characters not only patronize child laborers, purchasing papers from newsboys, buying fruit from undersized berry pickers, giving shopping orders to young grocery boys, and relegating their laundry into adolescent hands, but also accept the system as the only choice for impoverished children, watching silently as minors venture out into the labor force, bandaging wounds without questioning the jobs that caused them, and even—on occasion—helping children to find employment. Only once is the concept of child labor ever seriously questioned, and in only one case does a child ever leave the labor force. (And even in that case, the child is able to stop working not because an alternate system of aid has been found, nor because someone has objected to children working and decided to intervene, but instead because a lost relative suddenly reappears and the child's income is no longer needed.)(36)

Throughout the books, the characters receive—and sometimes encourage—the services of child laborers, usually without comment:

Jack Fitch was looking over an evening paper he had purchased from a newsboy on coming out of the theater.(37)

Aunt Bessie lived in an apartment house and the colored boy who answered the bell knew Sunny (Boy) very well indeed.(38)

The performance had begun. It was funny to hear a boy sing a comical song that was intended to be pathetic. . . the Chelton young folks (the central characters) applauded it vigorously. The small boy who sang was very much surprised at the applause—and so were many others in the playhouse. But the motor boys and girls kept it up, until the little fellow was compelled to come out front and bow. Then they let him go.(39)

None object to minors waiting on them, nor are they concerned about the age of the children or the late hours the children keep.

Occasionally, series book characters are exposed to children who have been injured or whose health has been damaged because of their jobs. Only one case, that of twelve-year-old Nellie, a cash girl who becomes sick while at a fresh-air camp, elicits criticism of child labor: "The child is too young to work so hard," Aunt Sarah declared. 'It is no wonder her health breaks down at the slightest cause, when she has no strength laid away to fight sickness'." (40)

Other injuries do not bring forth the same response. Instead, the characters in the series books react with a surprising lack of sympathy; they seem to view injured children in the same way they do child labor: as a part of life. They neither question the wisdom of putting a young child in a potentially dangerous occupation, nor do they spend a great deal of time worrying about the child's welfare. In "Sunny Boy at the Seashore," for example, Sunny Boy Horton and his father learn that Mr. Horton must make a trip downtown because the "boy laundry driver" who has picked up Mr. Horton's shirts has been in a collision. Sunny Boy's first comment is, "Take me with you, Daddy? . . . I could see the accident," while Mrs. Horton remarks, "Probably the boy is a reckless driver, or he wouldn't have had this accident." (41) When Mr. Horton returns, Sunny Boy asks about the young driver.

"The poor chap's in the hospital," replied Mr. Horton soberly. "Nothing more than bad bruises, they say. I imagine, from the way the superintendent talked, that (the boy's) been in pickles before this for careless driving. There were half a dozen of us there, reclaiming stuff. How many shirts was I supposed to have in that bundle, Olive?" (42)

That ends the discussion of the boy's situation. In the course of the conversation, the boy's carelessness is cited not once, but twice, as the cause of the accident; his employer and his youth are never blamed.

Female protagonists show little more sympathy. On a walking tour of the countryside, the four heroines of "The Outdoor Girls of Deepdale" encounter a boy peddler who has hurt his foot. "I stepped on a piece of glass, and it went right through my shoe," he explains, and the girls "noticed that his foot was quite badly cut." (43) They bandage his foot—in essence, helping him to resume work—and then entrust him with a lost child, one so young she can barely speak coherently, expecting him to return the child to her mother, who lives "about a mile" away. They watch as he leaves: "Then, shouldering his pack and taking hold of Nellie's hand . . . the boy peddler moved off down the road limping, the girls calling out goodbyes to him." (44) The girls' reaction?

"I hope it's all right—to let that child go off with him," said Mollie.

"Of course it is," declared Betty. "That boy had the nicest, cleanest face I've ever seen. And he must suffer from that cut."

"Oh, I think it will be all right," said Amy. "You could trust that boy." (45)

None seem to worry about the boy having to walk almost a mile with a heavy pack, a small child, and an injured foot, although they later learn "that the boy had to remain (at the little girl's house) for a week to recover from the cut on his foot." (46)

While the main characters in the series books do occasionally offer a helping hand to child laborers, that hand is often holding a job offer rather than a way out of the work force. (It should be noted that the children are portrayed as eager to work and the characters feel they are doing the poor children a favor by employing them.)

Jack was greatly taken with Andy, and promised to pick him up for

a ride every time the **Whirlwind** (Jack's car) came out Squaton way.

"Maybe you could get me a job," said the little fellow (Andy), glancing up with unstinted admiration at Cora's handsome brother.

"Believe I could," replied Jack. "Let me see, what is your specialty—what can you do?"

"I am a caddy," replied Andy proudly. "They say I'm just as quick as any of them to trace a ball."

"Well now, that's fine!" declared Jack. "I play golf out Chelton way. Suppose you just take a trolley ride in next Saturday, and we will see what we can do." (47)

Later in the same book, when two little berry pickers who have run away from a harsh employer are finally found, Jack's sister is more than willing to take care of them.

"And now," resumed the detective, "what are we to do with these young ladies? We have sufficient evidence to keep them away from Mrs. Ramsy. She is not a person capable of looking after children. She has all she can do to look after the mighty dollar."

"Oh, if you will only let us work," pleaded Rose. "I know a lot about housework."

"Why, we want some one right away," said Bess. "Our maid has nervous prostration . . . Couldn't you let Rose and Nellie stay right here, officer? We could give them both something to do."

"They certainly can wash dishes nicely," put in Cora, smilingly. (48)

In sharp contrast to this easy acceptance of lower-class children working, however, are the attitudes of upper-middle class characters when faced with the possibility that one of their own might enter the work force. After Dorothy Dale, the heroine of "Dorothy Dale's School Rivals," is asked to help at a railroad lunch counter in an emergency and complies, she is summoned to the office of the headmistress of her school, where the following conversation takes place:

After exchanging greetings the principal began with her rather painful discourse.

"I have sent for you, Dorothy," she said, "on account of some rather surprising stories that have come to my ears. I can scarcely credit them. At the same time I must make sure that these rumors are groundless. Did you—take charge of that lunch counter at the new depot, this morning?"

"Why, yes; I did," replied Dorothy, coloring to the eyes, "but I only did so to help the young girl who has charge of it. She had to leave, and called me to go over there for a few minutes."

"It seems incredible that a Glenwood (School) young lady should do such a thing," Mrs. Pangborn said. (49)

This is not an isolated incident. In "The Rover Boys on Land and Sea," the three Rover brothers and their girlfriends are shipwrecked, then taken aboard by a passing ship whose Captain insists they must work to pay for their passage. After some discussion, a compromise is reached: "'Well, we (boys) work,' said Dick (Rover). 'But you must not force the young ladies to do anything.'" (50) The boys work for several hours, until they discover one of the passengers is the thief who robbed them several days earlier. After recovering their stolen funds, the boys are able to travel as passengers instead of laborers, while the thief is made to work. The girls are "highly pleased" with the boys' change of status, and one tells Dick, "I didn't want to see you do the work of a common sailor." (51)

Even the Bobbsey twins and their friends, who volunteer to pick peas one day to help an injured neighbor, encounter the same contrast in attitudes about child labor. The neighbor had "hired some boys (the day before) but they broke down so many vines she had to stop them"; (52) now the family could be facing a financial crisis, since the farm ("depend(s) upon the return from the crop as an important part of the summer's income" and the peas are spoiling in the fields.(5) Yet when the Bobbseys appear, ready to work—as a good deed, not as preparation for steady employment—the neighbor's first response is uncertain: "Are you sure your mother won't mind?" Mrs. Burns asked the boys, knowing (their) folks did not need the money paid to pick peas." (54) Financial crisis or not, the neighbor is well aware that children from the Bobbsey twins' social class do not belong in the fields.

In essence, all of these attitudes towards child labor—from dispassionately viewing injured children, to finding indigent children employment, to rejecting upper-middle class characters as potential laborers—underscore the idea that financial necessity justifies child labor. Dorothy Dale, the Rover boys, and the Bobbsey twins do not belong in the labor force because they do not "need the money"; consequently, the characters around them react unfavorably when faced with these children as laborers. In contrast, children from impoverished families are presented as having no other alternative; they must work or starve. Employing children, then is helping them to survive; pitying a child laborer is wasted emotion, because the alternative to labor is far worse. Since all of the lower class children in the series books who provide explanations for their presence in the labor force cite financial necessity, the circle is complete: children are working because they need the money; because they need money, it is all right for them to work.

The cause of these attitudes in series books—attitudes which not only contradict the facts about reasons for child labor but also overlook all social welfare programs (55)—is uncertain. It is possible that they are adults' attempts to manipulate children's attitudes towards child labor: either by stressing economic necessity as the sole cause of child labor, to suggest that the reader, presumably from a middle class background, need not think about entering the work force, or by attempting to make palatable and presentable an ugly but visible situation in the "real world"—to "sugar coat" child labor, shielding young readers from its disturbing aspects by substituting a fictionalized version, complete with willing workers and superficially appealing jobs. It is, however, also quite probable that the attitudes in the books are simply a result of the books' transition from working class to leisure class heroes, since the earlier books, such as those by Horatio Alger, Jr., followed the struggles of a heroic young laborer who, after facing hardships (such as cruel and deceitful employers, job-related injuries, and employers' indifference to employees' welfare) and receiving assistance (such as an offer of a better job), eventually achieved economic security. When the books' focus shifted to upper middle class characters, the same characteristics and attitudes were retained, but distorted through the change of emphasis: injured children still appear, but without the surrounding tale to show the labor triumphing over hardships; helping hands to better jobs are still present, but the rest of the story chronicling the character's financial success is deleted; economic necessity still remains, but as a brief justification for labor, not to accentuate the pathos of working children or to establish an appropriate background from which the hero can rise.

Whatever the cause, the result was that even as late as 1920 series books were still offering images of child laborers based on myths rather than re-

ality, and a generation of young readers was still learning that for a certain class child labor was an acceptable and necessary part of life.

Notes

(1) H. L. Bliss, "Census Statistics of Child Labor," *Journal of Political Economy*, XIII (1904-1905), 246. In Robert H. Bremner, ed., *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), II, 605.

(2) Raymond G. Fuller, *Child Labor and the Constitution* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1923), p. 6.

(3) It should be noted that, despite the capsule characterization "rags-to-riches," the child workers in Alger's novels did not become millionaires. Their "success" often consisted of little more than employment in a white collar job with chances for advancement within the business, and this was often achieved with the aid of fortuitous circumstances and coincidences, rather than solely through the boys' industry.

(4) While children's series books were published earlier than the late 1800s, many of the earlier series were heavily didactic and/or instructive. It was not until late in the century that the models for today's popular series emerged.

(5) "For It Was Indeed He," *Fortune*, April 1934, pp. 86, 88; George T. Dunlap, *The Fleeting Years: A Memoir* (New York: privately printed, 1937), p. 193; Bob Chenu, "The Most Popular Boys Series of Books," *Dime Novel Round-Up*, 46 (Dec. 1979), 98-99; Deidre Johnson, "Popular Girls' and Tots' Series; or, The Difference Between the Sexes," *Yellowback Library*, 2 (Jan./Feb. 1982), 7-8.

(6) "Child laborer" is here used to refer to any children under the age of sixteen working at jobs other than part-time work for their parents. In most cases, workers' ages are not given in the texts; any laborer referred to as a "boy" or a "girl" was considered to be under sixteen unless textual evidence suggested otherwise.

The thirteen books that included references to child labor were, in order of original publication: Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country* (1907; rpt. New York: Wanderer Books, 1979); Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore* (1907; rpt. New York: Wanderer Books, 1979); Margaret Penrose, *Dorothy Dale: A Girl of To-Day* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1908); Margaret Penrose, *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1911); Allen Chapman, *Fred Fenton on the Crew* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Allen Chapman, *Tom Fairfield at Sea* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Laura Lee Hope, *The Outdoor Girls of Deepdale* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1913); Gertrude W. Morrison, *The Girls of Central High on Lake Luna* (1913; rpt. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., n.d.); Grace Brooks Hill, *The Corner House Girls Under Canvas* (New York: Barse & Hopkins, 1915); Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins in a Great City* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1917); Alice B. Emerson, *Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1920); Alice B. Emerson, *Betty Gordon in Washington* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1920); Ramy Allison White, *Sunny Boy at the Seashore* (New York: Barse & Hopkins, 1920).

The remaining fifteen titles, again in order of original publication, were: Arthur M. Winfield, *The Rover Boys on Land and Sea* (1903; rpt. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, n.d.); Laura Lee Hope, *The Bobbsey Twins* (1904; rpt. New York: Wanderer Books, 1979); Clarence Young, *The Motor Boys* (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1906); Arthur M. Winfield, *The Rover Boys on the Farm*

(New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1908); Clarence Young, **Jack Ranger's School Victories** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1908); Edward Stratmeyer, **The Football Boys of Lakeport** (Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1909); Margaret Penrose, **The Motor Girls through New England** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1911); Margaret Penrose, **Dorothy Dale's School Rivals** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1912); Alice B. Emerson, **Ruth Fielding of the Red Mill** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Alice B. Emerson, **Ruth Fielding at Briarwood Hall** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Margaret Penrose, **The Motor Girls on the Coast** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Clarence Young, **The Motor Boys after a Fortune** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1913); Frank A. Warner, **Bobby Blake at Bass Cove** (1915; rpt. Racine, Wis.: Whitman Publishing Co., n.d.); Alice B. Emerson, **Ruth Fielding in Moving Pictures** (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1916); Laura Lee Hope, **The Bobbsey Twins in Washington** (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1920). All of the above titles except **The Football Boys of Lakeport** were published under pseudonyms; all of the titles published after 1905-6 except **The Football Boys of Lakeport** and **The Rover Boys on the Farm** were the work of hired writers: Edward Stratmeyer developed the plot outlines for the books, but other writers filled in the texts.

Hereafter, the series books will be cited by title.

(7) Fortunately, Dorothy's father's fortune was saved and Dorothy was able to continue her education (pp. 196-197, 234).

(9) **The Motor Boys after a Fortune**, pp. 117-126; **The Rover Boys on the Farm**, pp. 108-111. Adolescent girls behind lunch counters were popular in the books: Dorothy Dale, in **Dorothy Dale's School Rivals**, not only encounters a girl working behind a counter, but has to take the girl's place for part of her shift. The description of the girl suggests she is about Dorothy's age—sixteen; therefore, she has not been counted as a child laborer (pp. 49-60).

(10) Bob Henderson, age thirteen, works on Bramble Farm throughout **Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm**, then runs away and reappears as an office boy in **Betty Gordon in Washington** (pp. 162-171).

(11) **The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach**, pp. 29, 68-69.

(12) **The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach**, pp. 22-24, 234-239. The Girls are finally sent off to trade school (p. 241).

(13) **The Bobbsey Twins in the Country** also mentions that a neighbor had hired some boys to pick peas; no description of the boys is included, nor is a number given; the boys are no longer working when the Bobbsey twins arrive on the scene; consequently, the boys have not been included in the count. This is, however, further support for the series' emphasis on agricultural workers.

(14) **The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach**, p. 32.

(15) **The Employment of Young Persons in the United States** (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., 1925), pp. 18-19, 25.

(16) Ibid.

(17) Ibid.

(18) **The Girls of Central High on Lake Luna**, pp. 84, 120.

(19) Viola I. Paradise, **Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in Oyster and Shrimp Canning Communities on the Gulf Coast** (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Children's Bureau Publication no. 98, 1922). In Grace Abbott, **The Child and the State** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), I, 372-374.

(20) **Second Report of the Factory Investigating Commission** (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1913), I, 133-136. In Jeremy P. Felt, **Hostages of Fortune: Child Labor Reform in New York State** (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 174.

(21) **Betty Gordon in Washington**, p. 171.

- (22) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, pp. 220-221.
 - (23) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, pp. 21, 23-25, 27-29.
 - (24) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, p. 36.
 - (25) *Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm*, p. 87.
 - (26) John Spargo, *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1906), pp. 210-216, in Bremner, pp. 635-637; *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Commerce and Labor, 1910), I, 120-123, in Bremner, pp. 638-640; Katharine DuPre Lumpkin and Dorothy Wolff Douglas, *Child Workers in America* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1937), pp. 140-154.
 - (27) In Bremner, p. 636.
 - (28) Fuller, p. 136.
 - (29) In Bremner, p. 636.
 - (30) Edward Clopper, *Child Labor in City Streets* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1912), pp. 71, 100.
 - (31) *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States*, I, 186. In Abbott, p. 360.
 - (32) *The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore*, pp. 67-68.
 - (33) *Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm*, pp. 129-130.
 - (34) *The Outdoor Girls of Deepdale*, pp. 177-179.
 - (35) Bliss, p. 246, in Bremner, p. 605; Fuller, p. 6.
 - (36) *The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore*, pp. 176-178. See note 40 for a more detailed discussion.
 - (37) *Tom Fairfield at Sea*, p. 9. This scene takes place late in the evening.
 - (38) *Sunny Boy at the Seashore*, p. 34.
 - (39) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, p. 167. This scene takes place in the evening.
 - (40) *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country*, p. 175. Mrs. Bobbsey also reacts strongly when she learns Nellie works all day, then attends school at night. Her response, however, leaves the reader wondering whether it is work or school to which she objects: "I think it's a shame . . . That child is not much larger than Nan, and to think of her working in a big store all day, then having to work at night school too!" (p. 166).
- Nellie's case is in some ways the most interesting of all the child laborers: she appears in two books, *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country* and *The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore*, and is a central character in the latter; she is also the only child who leaves the work force: her father finally returns from a sea journey with enough money to support his family. One wonders if Aunt Sarah and Mrs. Bobbsey's comments are intended not so much as criticism of child labor as they are as background to establish Nellie's pathetic position, thus making her father's return more dramatic.
- At best, the books' attitude towards Nellie is ambivalent: while Mrs. Bobbsey and Aunt Sarah are upset by Nellie's employment, *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country* also states that Nellie views her position "with some pride, for many little girls are not smart enough to hold such a position" (p. 165). *The Bobbsey Twins at the Seashore* continues this confusing approach, for while Nellie is pitied by the Bobbseys and their peers, the paragraphs describing Nellie's first appearance at the seashore again stress the positive aspects of Nellie's job:

If Dorothy (the Bobbsey twins' cousin) had expected to find in the little cash girl a poor, sickly, ill child, she must have been disappointed, for the girl that came with Mrs. Manily (the matron of the fresh-air camp) had none of these failings. She was tall and graceful, very pale, but nicely

dressed . . . Even Mrs. Manily, who knew Nellie to be a capable girl, was surprised at the way she "fell in" with Nan and Dorothy, and Mrs. Manily was quite charmed with her quiet, reserved manner. The fact was that Nellie had met so many strangers in the big department store, she was entirely at ease and accustomed to the little polite sayings of people in the fashionable world (pp. 64-65).

(41) Pp. 38-39.

(42) P. 41.

(43) Pp. 176, 178.

(44) P. 184.

(45) Ibid.

(46) P. 185.

(47) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, pp. 68-69.

(48) *The Motor Girls at Lookout Beach*, p. 239.

(49) P. 69.

(50) P. 69.

(51) P. 81. The thief, a boy about the Rover boys' age, does not receive the same sympathetic treatment:

When the girls came on deck they found Baxter (the thief) doing some of the work which Dick and Tom (Rover) had been doing the morning before. At first they were inclined to laugh, but Dorá stopped herself and her cousins. . .

But the (Rover) boys were not so considerate, and Tom laughed outright when he caught sight of Baxter swabbing up some dirt on the rear deck (pp. 85-86).

(52) *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country*, p. 102.

(53) *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country*, p. 103. A full paragraph is devoted to explaining the importance of harvesting the crop immediately.

(54) Ibid. The idea is reinforced when the boys refuse payment, adding, "No, really, Mrs. Burns; mother wouldn't like us to take the money" (p. 105).

(55) Homer Folks, "Poverty and Parental Dependence as an Obstacle to Child Labor Reform," *Child Labor and the Republic* (New York: National Child Labor Committee Proceedings, vol. 5, n. d.) discusses many of the scholarship and aid systems set up across the country to provide financial assistance for families and allow children to remain in school (pp. 2-6). Statistics are given for 1905-06, two years before the publication of *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country*, the earliest book in this study that includes instances of child labor.

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